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ABSTRACT

In this progress report a summary of activities of the Pennsylvania Day Care Study Project is organized along the following framework: (1) design of an information management system, (2) the core analysis, and (3) exploratory studies. Activities needed in the future to accomplish goals are discussed as well as completed aspects of the project. (DP)

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THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY

The Institute for the Study of Human Development
Center for Human Services Development

THE PENNSYLVANIA DAY CARE STUDY

PROGRESS REPORT

PS 007224

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Technical Report #11 November 1, 1972

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THE PENNSYLVANIA DAY CARE STUDY

Introduction

The Pennsylvania Day Care Study, funded through the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, operates under the auspices of the Center for Human Services Development of The Pennsylvania State University. The Study was initiated in March, 1971, to: 1) provide information relevant to current day care services and an information system to facilitate the appraisal and management of day care within the Commonwealth, and 2) investigate a number of important questions relevant to the development of state-wide day care services.

More specifically, the Study goals include:

1. A basic information profile of all licensed or approved day care facilities in the Commonwealth.
2. A computer-based information/report system for day care.
3. A detailed survey of state-wide day care services.
4. Assessment of the effects of day care on the children served.
5. Assessment of the effects of day care on the families served.
6. Assessment of the effects of day care on the community.
7. A cost benefit analysis of day care.

The period March - October, 1971, was utilized primarily for developing organization, staffing, and preliminary planning. A question asking approach was followed, that is, efforts were directed towards determining the most important questions which one might ask

concerning day care and its effects. Beginning in October, 1971, a series of interrelated studies and projects was initiated to provide at least preliminary answers to these questions and to provide an understanding of the overall day care picture in Pennsylvania.

Administrative Context

The Pennsylvania Day Care Study operates in a rather unusual university context, one that approximates the ideal for such an undertaking. Indeed, the multidisciplinary, applied, and functional nature of this context seems designed especially for the study of complex social services such as day care.

Multidisciplinary Nature

The College of Human Development, with which the project is directly related, is one of the ten colleges of The Pennsylvania State University located at the University Park Campus in State College, Pa. Designed to provide opportunities for study and training in a number of human services professions, it brings together experienced, top quality personnel from a variety of disciplines. The college has five administrative units. Four units reflect academic orientation representing instructional programs in Biological Health, Individual and Family Studies, Community Development, and Man-Environment Relations. The fifth administrative unit is the Institute for the Study of Human Development.

The Institute for the Study of Human Development provides a setting for interdisciplinary study and research concerned with the many facets of human development. To facilitate the broad investigation of issues

and problems of human development, several centers associated with the Institute have been established. One of these is the Center for Human Services Development.

The Center for Human Services Development was established in association with the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare to focus University efforts on human service activities under the jurisdiction of the Welfare Department. The Pennsylvania Day Care Study is one activity initiated under the umbrella of the Center.

Professional and Applied Nature

The College of Human Development is one of the University's professional colleges. As such it is not only concerned with the development of knowledge but with its applications. Close liaison with the Department of Public Welfare (DPW), particularly with the Department's Office of Inter-Program Planning and Evaluation and the Bureau of Child Development Programs further insures a reality orientation.

Functional Nature

University personnel seldom have the financial and personnel resources needed to focus their efforts on broad social systems in their natural state nor do they have ready access to the social service agencies involved. At the same time, governing agencies administering large social programs seldom have more than a fleeting commitment from university personnel for help in solving their problems. Rather than a consultant-administrator arrangement, the context of this study has been designed to foster cooperative, continuing professional relations. Additionally, the Commonwealth campuses of the University provide an opportunity for

field staff recruitment and bases for operations throughout the Commonwealth.

Activities Summaries

A brief outline of the proposed activities of the Pennsylvania Day Care Study was included in Project Technical Report No. 3 (May 1, 1972) which this report supercedes. This update of that report contains detailed commitments of the project through the end of the fiscal year.

In Project Technical Report No. 3 the projected activities for fiscal year 1973 were broken down into three basic activity units -- The Information Management System, the Core Analysis, and Exploratory Studies. The same general framework is followed here.

Information Management System

From its inception, one of the primary purposes of the Pennsylvania Day Care Study has been to develop for the Department of Public Welfare, and particularly the Director of the Bureau of Child Development Programs, an information system which would facilitate the supervision and management of day care services. This continues to be the area of primary concern of the project.

Objectives. The objectives of this aspect of the project are two-fold. The first has to do with data output, the second with data input.

1. *The primary goal for June, 1973 is to have a working, predominately computerized reporting system which will supply required information machine outputs in rapid response to demand.*

The system would provide at least the following:

-- Day care facility rosters by:

a. type of facility (home, center, MH/MR)
b. age group served
c. geographic breakdown
d. any combination of the above

-- Address labels by facility type and zip code.

-- Any combination of variables listed under the facility (with appropriate labels and formats).

-- Any combination of facilities listed under any combination of stored variables.

-- Cross tabulation of any data category and/or stored variable.

-- Frequency counts on any stored variable and/or category.

-- Specialized routines for periodic enrollment reporting.

-- Specialized routines for financial reporting.

Such a system represents a time-efficient network of computer programs which will be flexible enough to meet current reporting needs but yet have the capacity to combine almost any variables in a variety of output summaries with clear formatting tailored to user status and sophistication. The system should meet three necessary characteristics: 1) versatility of storage and retrieval capabilities, 2) ease of storage and retrieval and 3) ease of interpretation for the user. It is anticipated that The Pennsylvania State University IBM 360 shall continue to serve as the hardward for the system.

2. *The second major goal for June, 1973 is the design of a streamlined (minimum redundancy), user oriented information flow system.*

Such a system would have the following characteristics:

-- Information accuracy and currency.

-- Efficiency (maximum data for minimal expense of money and manpower).

-- Flexibility (gained through facility and item sampling).

Specific instruments for such a system would include:

-- A revised edition of the short mail questionnaire to gather new or undated information on day care facility characteristics for all Pennsylvania day care facilities (January, 1973).

-- A financial questionnaire for all appropriate auspice agencies (January, 1973).

-- Revised editions of questionnaires for homes, centers, and auspice agencies [both for ordinary and exceptional child facilities of comprehensive information on representative samples (Spring, 1973)].

Present Status. Essentially, the facility roster, address label, and variable by facility capabilities required under objective 1 are in existence and working. Frequency count capability and cross tabulation capability are available through supplementary sources.

Initial efforts in the data flow system have been initiated. Two mail questionnaires have been used, one for homes and one for centers. In addition, comprehensive questionnaires and observation schedules have been used with both homes and centers. The data obtained from these questionnaires constitutes our current computer-stored data bank. Most data predates April, 1972. Revised questionnaires have been constructed but need further revision.

A comprehensive file of state and federal bureaucratic forms for reporting information on day care in Pennsylvania has been amassed. These include report forms from centers to DPW, centers to auspice

agencies, regional office reports, DPW to HEW reports and so forth. They will be used in the analysis of user needs.

Specific Activities. To accomplish the two major objectives of this area a variety of activities will be required. These activities include:

1. Establishment of a data bank based on new information supplied by updated questionnaire surveys, census data, and processing of raw data for specialized summaries and collapsing of data.

2. Conduct of a needs analysis encompassing the information needs of DPW, day care auspice agency, day care facility, and project staff which will entail the following:

   A. Survey of all forms used for state and federal reporting of all information relating to day care within Pennsylvania.

   B. Expressed information needs of state level personnel who coordinate day care in Pennsylvania.

   C. Survey of information wants of day care facilities.

   D. Information needs of core research studies to be conducted by project staff in reference to sampling variables.

   E. Information deemed pertinent by project staff to a well-constructed management system but not immediately desired by DPW or day care facility staff.

3. Design and implementation of sampling procedures for use with the comprehensive questionnaires:

   A. Stratified random sampling procedures for administering questionnaires (February, 1973).

   B. Item sampling resulting in several component questionnaires (Prototypes: February, 1973).

4. Maintenance of current file of all day care regulations of the federal government and all 50 states and of a current general summary of the regulations.

5. Maintenance of files relating to lines of communication and the structure of day care in Pennsylvania which includes:

   A. All communications.

   B. Parent organizations and agencies.

C. Defunct day care programs.

D. Administrative chains.

E. Funding agencies and source.

Core Analysis

Analysis of the process and impact of day care have constituted the second area of concern of the Pennsylvania Day Care Study since its inception. In many ways the complexity of the problems involved in this area have required that last year's activities and this year's activities serve as preliminaries for the development of a well controlled, carefully designed longitudinal study capable of assessing the complex interaction of many variables. Such a study is neither easily conceptualized nor easily implemented. If a full understanding of the impact of a broad ranged social service such as day care is to be attempted, there is need for a variety of experts working in unprecedently integrated ways. Further, since so little is known about the process and impact of such a system, and since existent measurement systems are hopelessly inadequate, much preparatory effort is needed.

Objectives. In the broadest sense the basic objectives of the project in this area are twofold:

1) Completion of presently on-going activities, and 2) the planning and design of next year's activities.

The specific areas of concern for the year's activities are as follows:

1. The first major objective for the year is the *completed analysis and report of Spring 1972 data for:*

-- *child impact*
-- *nutrition study*
-- *family studies*
-- *staff and staff/child interactions analysis*
-- *day care site visit questionnaire/observation survey.*

. (March, 1972)

For the child impact area this means analysis of the data gathered on the child's:

-- flexibility and adaptability in reaching a goal

-- perception of parental and teacher roles

-- social competence: ability to get along with peers

-- ability to express himself verbally

-- ability to express emotions

-- exploratory behavior: information seeking

-- self-awareness and self-esteem

-- future orientation

-- values: perception of good and bad

-- physical skills

-- visual discrimination

For the nutritional study this means analysis of data gathered from day care centers and parents concerning:

-- the food and eating conditions provided in the home and the center.

For the family studies this means the continued analysis of data on:

-- the relationships between day care facilities and the community.

-- the impact of day care on family economics.

-- the parent-child relationships as they influence and are influenced by day care.

-- the relationship between parent participation in day care and the marital relationship.

For the staff and staff child interactions analysis this means the continued data gathering and analysis.

For the site visit questionnaire/observation survey this means the continued implementation and analysis of the day care physical environment and the cost analysis for day care.

2. *The second major objective for the year in this area is the completion of all preparations necessary for the design and planning for the core analysis longitudinal study to be conducted for year 1974.* (June, 1973)

Present Status

During 1971-72:

-- Measures to assess 11 areas of child development were designed and administered to 284 children in day care in Pennsylvania.

-- Site visit questionnaires and observation forms were administered in 302 day care centers and 162 homes.

-- Interviews were conducted with 210 mothers and fathers of day care children.

-- Cost data have been collected from two sources - DPW records and site visits.

-- Questionnaire responses concerning the child's nutrition were collected from 40 parents and the centers in which their children are enrolled.

-- 20 staff from 20 different programs were observed in extensive detail.

Data are in various stages of analysis and reports are in various stages of completion.

Specific Activities

1. Measuring instrument refinement. The measuring instruments in all areas are in need of further refinement; in particular:

FIGURE 1

CORE STUDY ANALYSIS

	Antecedents	Day Care Process	Outcomes
Child	Basic characteristics: age, ethnic background, primary and secondary language, developmental disabilities Individual development assessment Health	Teacher behavior Curriculum Physical environment Social and health services Parent participation and service utilization Costs Staffing arrangements and characteristics	Individual development assessment
Parents	Reasons for day care use Attitudes and values of child care and child rearing Parent/child relations Marital relations Financial condition		Attitudes and values of child care and child rearing Parent/child relations Marical relations Financial conditions
Personnel	Objectives for day care "Role" view Attributes (sex, age, education and past experience) Job satisfaction Employment conditions Career plans, career goals		"Role" view Job satisfaction Career plans and career goals

-- Child development inventory must be field tested to determine its sensitivity for assessing changes over time, and across day care environments. It also needs to be "bench-marked" against more traditional measures.

-- Analysis needs to be conducted to assess which programmatic (process) variables make a difference in the development of children and in the variety of family variables.

-- Some new instruments need to be developed to assess parental child rearing attitudes and staff attitudes.

-- Survey site visit and mail questionnaire instruments need to be shortened and divided into usable components.

2. Additional field test and pilot activities will be required.

3. Feedback on study results needs to be provided for all day care personnel participating in the different studies.

4. Integration of all results of previous studies and new field testings must be undertaken, and a design of the "core analysis" study formulated.

5. Clear definitions of sample needs and procedures need to be worked out.

Exploratory Studies

No new exploratory studies will be undertaken. All present studies previously listed as exploratory will become integrated with the core analysis.